

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all claims have been presented whether or not an amendment has been made. The claims have been amended as follows:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method of using a computer system for on-line processing of merchandise returns for a plurality of merchants, comprising the steps of:
 storing a set of return rules in a database for each of the plurality of merchants;
 receiving, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by a customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise;
 in response to receiving the request from the customer, identifying a merchant associated with the at least one item of merchandise and identifying transaction information associated with the at least one item of merchandise;
 using the set of return rules associated with the identified merchant and the transaction information to validate the return;
 upon validating the return, electronically delivering data about the customer to the merchant associated with the return;
 processing the return in accordance with the set of ~~one or more~~ return rules associated with the ~~merchandise~~ merchant.
2. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the receiving step is performed via an Internet access tool associated with the customer.
3. **(Cancelled)**
4. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by determining if the return is valid.
5. **(Original)** The method of Claim 4, further comprising step of notifying the customer, via the Internet, whether the return is valid.
6. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by determining disposition of the item.

7. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by determining a shipping destination of the item.

8. **(Cancelled)**

9. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by crediting an account of the customer.

10. **(Cancelled)**

11. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a user interface to the customer, via an Internet access tool, wherein the user interface displays information associated with return of one or more items purchased by the customer.

12. **(Original)** The method of Claim 11, wherein the user interface displays a list of transactions associated with the customer, listing items for potential return by the customer.

13. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of downloading a return label to the customer via the Internet.

14. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying a shipping agent of the return.

15. (Currently Amended) An on-line merchandise return system for processing merchandise returns for a plurality of merchants, comprising a computer system programmed to:

store a set of return rules in a database for each of the plurality of merchants;

receive a return request, via the Internet, representing a request by a customer to initiate a return at least one item of merchandise; **and**

in response to receiving the request from the customer, identify a merchant associated with the at least one item of merchandise and identify transaction information associated with the at least one item of merchandise;

use the set of return rules associated with the identified merchant and the transaction information to validate the return;

upon validating the return, electronically deliver data about the customer to the merchant associated with the return; and

process the return in accordance with the set of one or more return rules associated with the ~~merchandise~~ merchant.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) ~~A computer product~~ Logic for facilitating online merchandise return services, the ~~computer product having instructions for~~ logic embodied in a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:

store a set of return rules in a database for each of the plurality of merchants;

~~receiving~~ receive, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by a customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise; ~~and~~

in response to receiving the request from the customer, identify a merchant associated with the at least one item of merchandise and identify transaction information associated with the at least one item of merchandise;

use the set of return rules associated with the identified merchant and the transaction information to validate the return;

upon validating the return, electronically deliver data about the customer to the merchant associated with the return; and

~~processing process~~ the return in accordance with the set of ~~one or more~~ return rules associated with the ~~merchandise~~ merchant.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) A method of using a computer for online merchandise returns, comprising the steps of:

receiving, from each of a plurality of merchants, ~~one or more~~ a set of return rules representing merchandise return policies of ~~a merchant~~ each merchant; and

storing the return rules in a database;

receiving, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by a customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise;

in response to receiving the request from the customer, identifying a selected one of the plurality merchants as being associated with the at least one item of merchandise;

using the set of return rules associated with the identified merchant to validate the return;

upon validating the return, processing the return in accordance with the set of return rules associated with the merchant.

20. (Currently Amended) An on-line merchandise return system for processing merchandise returns for a plurality of merchants, comprising a computer system programmed to:

receive, from each of a plurality of merchants, ~~one or more~~ a set of return rules representing merchandise return policies of ~~a merchant~~ each merchant; and

store the return rules in a database;

receive, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by a customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise;

in response to receiving the request from the customer, identify a selected one of the plurality merchants as being associated with the at least one item of merchandise;

use the set of return rules associated with the identified merchant to validate the return;

upon validating the return, process the return in accordance with the set of return rules associated with the merchant.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~A computer product~~ Logic for facilitating online merchandise return services for a plurality of merchants, the ~~computer product having instructions for logic embodied in a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:~~

~~receiving~~ receive, from each of a plurality of merchants, one or more a set of
return rules representing merchandise return policies of ~~a merchant~~ each merchant; and

~~storing~~ store the return rules in a database;

receive, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by a customer
to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise;

in response to receiving the request from the customer, identify a selected one of
the plurality merchants as being associated with the at least one item of merchandise;

use the set of return rules associated with the identified merchant to validate the
return;

upon validating the return, process the return in accordance with the set of
return rules associated with the merchant.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of using a computer system for on-line processing of merchandise returns, comprising the steps of:

in a first transaction associated with an online purchase of at least one item of merchandise, obtaining customer-specific return information from a customer associated with the at least one item of merchandise;

transmitting a client identifier to a client system associated with the customer;

in a second transaction, receiving, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by ~~a customer~~ the customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise, the return request comprising the client identifier that uniquely identifies the client system from which the return request is received;

using the client identifier to identify the customer-specific return information;

processing the return in accordance with one or more return rules associated with the merchandise; and

electronically notifying a merchant of the return.

23. (Original) The method of Claim 22, further comprising the step of electronically providing the merchant with information about the customer.

24. **(Currently Amended)** An on-line merchandise return system, comprising a computer system programmed to:

in a first transaction associated with an online purchase of at least one item of merchandise, obtain customer-specific return information from a customer associated with the at least one item of merchandise;

transmit a client identifier to a client system associated with the customer;

in a second transaction, receive, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by a customer the customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise, the return request comprising the client identifier that uniquely identifies the client system from which the return request is received;

use the client identifier to identify the customer-specific return information;

process the return in accordance with one or more return rules associated with the merchandise; and

electronically notify the merchant of the return.

25. **(Original)** The method of Claim 24, wherein the system is further programmed to electronically provide the merchant with information about the customer.

26. (Currently Amended) ~~A computer product~~ Logic for facilitating online merchandise return services, the ~~computer product having instructions for~~ logic embodied in a computer-readable medium and when executed operable to:

in a first transaction associated with an online purchase of at least one item of merchandise, obtain customer-specific return information from a customer associated with the at least one item of merchandise;

transmit a client identifier to a client system associated with the customer;

in a second transaction, receive, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by the customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise, the return request comprising the client identifier that uniquely identifies the client system from which the return request is received;

~~receiving return rules representing merchandise return policies of a merchant~~
use the client identifier to identify the customer-specific return information;

process the return in accordance with one or more return rules associated with the merchandise; and

electronically ~~notifying~~ notify the merchant of the return.

27. (Currently Amended) The ~~computer product~~ logic of Claim 26, ~~wherein the instructions are further for electronically providing~~ further operable to electronically provide the merchant with information about the customer.